Before the

Federal Communications Commission

Washington, D.C. 20554

GN Docket No. 25-133

Comment to Modify 47 CFR § 74.1231(h)
To Permit Split Programming on FM Translators Operated by Class D AM Stations

Introduction

I respectfully submit this comment to propose a modification to 47 CFR § 74.1231(h). The proposed amendment would allow Class D AM radio stations that operate FM translators to originate separate programming on their FM translator, rather than be limited to rebroadcasting the AM signal. This flexibility would enhance the service capabilities of Class D AM stations, particularly those subject to sunset sign-off requirements.

Statement of Purpose

The core objective of this proposal is to provide Class D AM stations with the regulatory flexibility to continue serving the public interest via their FM translators. Under current FCC rules, FM translators are restricted to rebroadcasting the primary AM signal, effectively limiting their utility for many Class D stations.

Under the proposed rule modification:

- Class D AM stations subject to sunset sign-off requirements would be permitted to continue service on their FM translator with original programming after the AM station ceases operation for the day.
- Class D AM stations not subject to sunset restrictions would be granted the option to provide distinct programming on their FM translators during any part of the broadcast day.

This flexibility would allow stations to diversify content, better reflect the needs of their communities, and more effectively compete in a changing media landscape.

To ensure regulatory clarity and compliance with public file obligations, the following practices are proposed:

- All issues and programming content, whether aired on the AM or FM signal, would be documented within the AM station's Public Inspection File.
- A standardized system of identifiers would be implemented to distinguish between programming on the AM and FM signals: e.g., WXXX-A (AM only), WXXX-F (FM only), and WXXX-AF (simulcast).

This documentation method would provide transparency for the public and the Commission while avoiding unnecessary duplication of records.

Regulatory and Operational Impact
The impact of this proposed rule change on the Commission and station operators would be minimal. The primary regulatory adjustment would involve updating the FCC's Public File system to allow stations to categorize programming by signal type within a single public file entry.

Operationally, stations would benefit from reduced administrative burden, as they would no longer be required to maintain separate public files for AM and FM operations. Instead, they would integrate relevant information into the existing AM file with minor additions.

Public Interest Considerations
This proposal is consistent with the Commission's longstanding commitment to enhancing localism, promoting programming diversity, and supporting the viability of AM radio services. Allowing such stations to use their FM translators more effectively will broaden their reach, improve service continuity, and increase engagement with a wider demographic.

Conclusion
As a broadcaster with over 50 years of experience in the radio industry, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by Class D AM stations, particularly in their efforts to remain relevant and competitive in today's media environment. Granting these stations the ability to originate separate programming on their FM translators would be a modest yet impactful regulatory change—one that supports innovation while preserving the Commission's core values of local service, public access, and operational transparency.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Commission initiate a rulemaking proceeding to amend Section 74.1231(h) as outlined above.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Hemeon -CPBE

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